Are you planning on fasting during Ramadan?

Ramadan is a special time of the year that brings increased spirituality, self-discipline, compassion and gratitude. If you are considering fasting during Ramadan and have diabetes, there are some precautions you can take to stay healthy.

Always speak with your healthcare provider and diabetes care team 1-2 months before the start of Ramadan. Your healthcare provider can assess your risk of fasting and may need to adjust your medications accordingly.

Remember that although fasting during Ramadan is obligatory upon all Muslims, there are exemptions that are emphasized in religious scripture. These include menstruating women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, individuals with acute or chronic diseases, and those who are travelling.

**Risks**

Fasting may be done safely by some while others may be at risk. Understand your potential risks and how to address complications if they arise. Risks include:

- Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar)
- Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- Dehydration and diabetes-related ketoacidosis (DKA)
Monitor your blood sugar
• Pricking your fingers does not break your fast and will give you the knowledge that you need to take care of yourself throughout the fast. It is important to check your blood sugar levels a few times throughout the day.

Balance your meals
• Choose a combination of whole grains or starchy vegetables, lean meats, and healthy fats like nuts or cheese at iftar, suhur, and snack to help you balance your blood sugar levels and keep you full and satisfied.
• You can follow the healthy plate method to balance your meals:
  — ½ of your plate is for non-starchy vegetables (eg. salad, cooked vegetables)
  — ¼ plate for whole grains or starchy vegetables (eg. whole wheat pita, naan, rice, corn, potato, oats)
  — ¼ plate for proteins (eg. eggs, nuts, fish, meat, cheese, beans, lentils)
  — Make sure you eat your suhur (pre-dawn meal) to help manage blood sugar levels

Stay hydrated
• Remember to drink enough water and fluids during the non-fasting hours. Try to reduce the amounts of sugary beverages and fruit juices you consume.
• Include hydrating foods with your meals and snack, such as cucumbers, watermelon, strawberries, zucchini and tomatoes.

Move your body
• Exercise can be maintained during Ramadan but try to avoid excessive exercise especially during the few hours before sunset. The nightly Taraweeh prayers can be considered exercise.

Break your fast if:
• Your blood sugars are <60 mg/dL
• Your blood sugar reaches <70 mg/dl in the first few hours after the start of the fast, especially if you took insulin, sulfonylurea drugs, or meglitinide at predawn
• Your blood sugar exceeds 300 mg/dl
• You don’t feel well

Next Steps
Make this special time of the year a safe and meaningful experience. Reach out to a diabetes educator or healthcare provider for more information on fasting. To find a diabetes educator near you, visit DiabetesEducator.org/Find.